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STATE OFFERS TIPS TO HELP OFFSET HIGH HEATING COSTS
Energy Assistance Available During Cold Weather

SACRAMENTO – California Department of Community Services and Development (CSD) Director Lloyd Throne joined state emergency and health officials in urging low-income, vulnerable Californians to prepare for extreme weather this winter.

"The elderly, young children and persons with disabilities are particularly vulnerable to hypothermia. Turning the heat down or off can compromise the comfort and health of the young and medically fragile," said Throne. "The reality is that many low-income families simply do not have the resources to turn their heat up to a comfortable level."

Throne says help is available. Consumers can contact their local utility companies to learn more about available programs and services that can help with high energy costs, such as alternative rates for energy for low-income eligible customers and free services, including weatherization and energy audits.

"Safety is always our first concern," said Throne. "However, low-income families cannot afford high energy costs. Therefore, to save money some families heat their households in a way that increases the risk of fire or carbon monoxide poisoning."

CSD partners with a network of 46 providers throughout the state who administer federal low-income energy grant programs in the local community. In 2006, CSD has distributed more than \$150 million in Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) funds to the network. LIHEAP services include weatherization assistance, such as attic insulation, weather-stripping and minor housing repairs, in addition to emergency and financial assistance to offset the high costs of home energy.

Throne suggested a series of no-cost or low-cost tips to safely reduce home heating costs:

No-Cost Energy Savings Tips:

- Turn down the thermostat to 68 degrees or lower during the day and to 55 degrees or off at night or when away from home.
- Wear layers of loose-fitting clothes, such as thermal underwear, sweaters, sweatshirts, sweatpants and socks, to trap body heat.
- Turn down the water heater to 120 degrees and fix leaks, especially hot water leaks.
- Open drapes to let the sun heat your home during the day and close them at night to help insulate your home.
- Close off unused rooms and the vents that heat those rooms.
- Keep warm-air registers, baseboard heaters and radiators clean and ensure they aren't blocked by furniture, carpeting or drapes.
- Move furniture around so you are sitting near interior walls instead of exterior walls and windows.
- Close your fireplace damper tightly when not in use.

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Low-Cost Energy Savings Tips:

- Clean or replace furnace filters once a month.
- Install weather-stripping and caulk leaky doors and windows.
- Install gaskets behind outlet covers.
- Add plastic sheeting to your windows or purchase plastic window covering kits or interior storm window kits.
- Install a programmable thermostat.
- Wrap your water tank with jacket insulation. Be sure to leave the air intake vent uncovered when insulating a gas water heater.
- Insulate the water pipes leading from your hot water heater.

Health and Safety Tips:

- Install smoke and carbon monoxide alarms in your home.
- Provide proper venting systems for all heating equipment.
- Never use your range or oven to heat your home or use a BBQ in your home or garage.
- Place space heaters on level, hard and nonflammable surfaces, not on carpets or rugs.
- Keep space heaters at least three feet from bedding, drapes, furniture and other flammable materials.
- Never leave a space heater on when you go to sleep or leave the area.
- Watch children and pets closely in rooms with heating equipment.
- Always use generators outdoors and away from doors, windows and vents.

For more information about weatherization services or LIHEAP, call (866) 675-6623 or log on to www.csd.ca.gov.

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